

## **Abbreviated NCCRESt Rubric for Looking at District Practices Instructions and Review Rubric**

Based on statutory language of the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [34 CFR §300.600(d) (3)], States are required to review the LEAs in the State to determine the extent to which the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education is the result of inappropriate identification. Tennessee requires all school districts that have been identified through 1) the annual collection and examination of data; and 2) determined to have Significant Disproportionality<sup>1</sup> for the FFY 2006 data to conduct a systematic review of district practices, policies and procedures through use of Tennessee's Abbreviated NCCRESt Rubric for Looking at District Practices<sup>2</sup>. Six key special education referral and disability identification areas of focus from the NCCRESt Rubric<sup>3</sup> provide a foundation and format for this review. This tool is designed to guide examination and provide opportunities to analyze the knowledge, skills, and dispositions leading to institutionalized practices that manifest into disproportionate identification. The process of assessing district, school, and classroom practices against this rubric can provide a vehicle for districts in the development of an effective district plan for improvement that:

- (1) identifies disproportionality areas of concern,
- (2) identifies areas for continued professional development and technical assistance to minimize disproportionate inappropriate special education referral and identification, and
- (3) ensures availability of appropriate special education referral, identification, and curriculum/instruction for all students within the general education environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition/Process Significant Disproportionality: <http://state.tn.us/education/speced/seassessment.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from *NCCRESt Rubric for Looking at District Practice* ([www.nccrest.org](http://www.nccrest.org))

<sup>3</sup> [www.nccrest.org](http://www.nccrest.org) – Tools and Resources

## INSTRUCTIONS – Review of District Practices, Policies and Procedures

School districts identified at Disproportionality Level 2 for FFY 2006 are required to conduct a system review with the Abbreviated NCCRESt Rubric for Looking at District Practices<sup>4</sup> and return to the DOE for evaluation.

- 1) Read thoroughly all of this section before you begin the review process.
- 2) Assemble a Disproportionality District Review Panel which represents multiple perspectives on the effectiveness of district practices. The review panel should include at least three system educators (e.g., director of school system, special education supervisor, general education supervisor, school psychologist, principal, etc.). Be sure to include input from other knowledgeable persons in the school system and community.
- 3) Designate a Team Facilitator to oversee and coordinate the review process.
- 4) Discuss the purposes for the review with the review panel:
  - (a) examination and analysis of district policies, practices and procedures for the appropriate referral and identification of students with disabilities and
  - (b) identification of specific elements to target for comprehensive improvement.
- 5) Review and Discuss the components of review items included in the abbreviated rubric. The rubric provides guidance for the panel review and analysis for each of the six Review Items and includes:
  - Column 1
    - Standard* – statement of review area
    - Focus Area* – statement of district practices related to the Standard
    - Describe* – guidance for district review in Focus Area
  - Columns 2, 3, 4
    - Beginning, Developing, At Standard* – descriptions related to the appropriate identification of children with disabilities of policies, practices and procedures for each Review Item.
  - Column 5
    - Evidence* – description of evidence or data to support the district's review.
    - (Note: Evidence should not be submitted to the DOE with the Review Rubric. All Evidence documented in this Review should be kept on file in the district's Central Office and be available for Monitoring purposes.
- 6) Review each focus area (Describe) and gather data/ documentation (Evidence) results from the panel's review. The *Describe* and *Evidence* sections provide guidance for quantitative and qualitative review of each focus area.
- 7) Complete the Disproportionality Review Panel Cover Sheet and Assurances.
- 8) Assemble results<sup>5</sup> from your District's Review and Return to the DOE
  - Using the electronic templates provided for this report, key in the results of your review (*descriptions and evidence*)
  - Assemble your Review in the following order:
    - ✓ Panel Cover Sheet and Assurances
    - ✓ Review Item number – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- 9) Submit your district review of policies, practices and procedures using the Abbreviated NCCRESt Rubric for Looking at District Practices Return triplicate copies of your review by U.S. Mail postmarked **no later than November 15, 2007** to Ann Sanders-Eakes, Andrew Johnson Tower-7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 710 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243.

<sup>4</sup> Abbreviated NCCRESt Rubric for Looking at District Policies: <http://state.tn.us/education/speced/seassessment.shtml>

<sup>5</sup> Abbreviated NCCRESt Review Report Templates: <http://state.tn.us/education/speced/seassessment.shtml>

**DISTRICT REVIEW ITEM 1**

| (1) STANDARD –<br>INDIVIDUALIZED<br>EDUCATION  | RATING DESCRIPTIONS  |  |   | (5) EVIDENCE   |
|--|--|--|---|--|
|  | (2) Beginning  | (3) Developing   | (4) At Standard   |  |
| <p>Children with disabilities are ensured access to, participation in, and progress in the general curriculum.</p> <p><b>FOCUS AREA</b><br/>The district regularly reviews referral and eligibility decisions for special education including methods, types of measures and frequency with which identification decisions are made.</p> <p><b>DESCRIBE</b> the methods, types of measures and frequency with which the district reviews referral and eligibility for special education.</p> <p><b>DESCRIBE</b> the types of tests and instruments used to conduct individual assessments when a student is referred for special education. How are these instruments chosen, and what does the district do to minimize bias for culturally and linguistically diverse students?</p> | <p>–The district identifies measures used to collect and record data on student referral and eligibility disaggregated by disability, race/ ethnicity, and gender. The district provides a list of tests used, with some explanation for the choices made.</p> | <p>–The district samples school data, disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender on at least an annual basis to ensure that schools are using appropriate procedures to refer and determine eligibility for special education.</p> <p>–The district provides a detailed explanation of the tests uses, the reasons for the selection of particular tests, and evidence that the tests are developed to minimize bias for culturally and linguistically diverse students.</p> | <p>–The district provides technical assistance and professional development to schools that appear to be over-referring and/or inappropriately identifying students to special education.</p> <p>–The district has developed a comprehensive testing process requiring multiple measures, including formal testing, observation, and family/ teacher input.</p> <p>–The district provides ongoing training and support in the appropriate usage of the tests, and ensures availability of qualified testers for students who speak a language other than English.</p> | <p>–Data about number of referrals, identifications, reviews.</p> <p>–Process for reviewing eligibility determinations.</p> <p>–Procedure for selecting and administering assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally and functionally.</p> <p>–Assessments used to gather relevant::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Cognitive Information</li> <li>·Functional information</li> <li>·Developmental</li> <li>·Information</li> <li>·Academic Information</li> </ul> |

**DISTRICT REVIEW ITEM 2**

| (1) STANDARD –<br>INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES  | RATING DESCRIPTIONS   |   |   | (5) EVIDENCE   |
|---|---|---|---|--|
|   | (2) Beginning   | (3) Developing  | (4) At Standard   |  |
| <p>Learning environments at all grade levels are designed to support and produce academic achievement for diverse learners.</p> <p><b>FOCUS AREA</b><br/>The District ensures that students who are culturally and linguistically diverse are represented equitably in all programs, including those for gifted and rapidly progressing students.</p> <p><b>DESCRIBE</b> the range of programs available in the district. Are there programs in which culturally and linguistically diverse students are over- or underrepresented? If so, what steps are taken to reduce/eliminate obstacles to ensure balanced representations in programs?</p> | <p>–The district provides a list of programs, with data about participation disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and disability.</p> <p>–Staffing levels and qualifications are reported.</p> | <p>–The district analyzes the program participation data by race/ethnicity, gender, and disability, and identifies areas of discrepancy in program participation, recruitment, location, and admission.</p> <p>–The district describes the process used for each program to identify, recruit, and select program participants.</p> | <p>–The district provides a comprehensive list of all in and out of school programs and activities available to students, with enrollment information disaggregated by race/ ethnicity, gender, and disability.</p> <p>–Disparities in participation are noted and plans are established and implemented to ensure increased diversity in participation.</p> <p>–Communities, families, and students are involved in identifying program needs, and in encouraging participation.</p> | <p>–Identify program options and participation/ enrollment rate within the district (include co-curricular and extracurricular).</p> <p>–Disaggregate participation by race, gender and disability category.</p> <p>–Report the level of staffing and the qualifications of the staff.</p> |

**DISTRICT REVIEW ITEM 3**

| (1) STANDARD –<br>INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES  | RATING DESCRIPTIONS  |   |   | (5) EVIDENCE  |
|---|--|---|---|---|
|   | (2) Beginning  | (3) Developing  | (4) At Standard   |   |
| <p>Learning environments at all grade levels are designed to support and produce academic achievement for diverse learners.</p> <p><b>FOCUS AREA</b><br/>The District provides and requires effective intervention options be used to respond to student learning difficulties, before or in lieu of referral, for special education services.</p> <p><b>DESCRIBE</b> what types of intervention options are available within the district to respond to learning difficulties, before or in lieu of referral, for special education services.</p> <p><b>DESCRIBE</b> the types of intervention that the district can use to reduce the likelihood that students will experience learning difficulties. What evidence is available to indicate these intervention options have been effective? How does the district ensure that academic and behavioral interventions are planned and implemented in ways that are culturally and linguistically responsive?</p> | <p>–The district provides a list of recommended interventions, with some methods for collecting data about the effectiveness of the interventions.</p> | <p>–The district provides a list of intervention options, and instructions as to how to evidence effectiveness.</p> <p>–The district analyzes evidence of effectiveness of interventions, and frequency and duration of interventions for issues of equity. Staff of general education provides written documentation of the interventions and their effectiveness.</p> | <p>–The district has developed a comprehensive resource listing intervention options across levels of interventions, utilizing family and community input in the development of these intervention options.</p> <p>–Ongoing professional development and support are offered to school staff to maximize the utilization and effectiveness of the interventions.</p> <p>–Data is collected and analyzed related to the impact of interventions.</p> | <p>–Identify program List the intervention options utilized at each level: 1) School wide (primary), 2) Targeted (secondary), and 3) Intensive (tertiary)</p> <p>–Provide evidence of the impact of the interventions on academic/behavioral performances (improved results for those participating in the intervention).</p> |

**DISTRICT REVIEW ITEM 4**

| (1) STANDARD –<br>INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES   | RATING DESCRIPTIONS   |   |  | (5) EVIDENCE  |
|--|---|---|--|---|
|  | (2) Beginning   | (3) Developing  | (4) At Standard  |   |
| <p>Learning environments at all grade levels are designed to support and produce academic achievement for diverse learners.</p> <p><b>FOCUS AREA</b><br/>The District provides on-going training and support to ensure that teachers address individual learning needs through differentiated instruction aligned to academic grade-level content.</p> <p><b>DESCRIBE</b> the professional development and support provided by the district. How have these efforts increased access to the general curriculum for all students?</p> | <p>–The district provides a list on one-time trainings for teachers in areas of differentiation, instruction, and grade-level content. The district provides LRE data, accommodations data, and performance data.</p> | <p>–The district conducts trainings, and analyzes data related to LRE, accommodations, and performance.</p> <p>–The analysis is used to determine further training needs.</p> | <p>–The district provides on-going, supported professional development and coaching for teachers, and provides resources for in-classroom supports to ensure implementation of differentiated instruction and alignment with grade level content.</p> <p>–Data analysis shows improvements in LRE, accommodation, and performance data for students with disabilities.</p> | <p>–Curriculum mapping.</p> <p>–Assessment mapping.</p> <p>–LRE data analysis over the past three years (where are the students with disabilities receiving services)?</p> <p>–Accommodations provided to students (identified on the IEP).</p> <p>–Performance rate – compared to educational setting.</p> |

**DISTRICT REVIEW ITEM 5**

| (1) STANDARD –<br>INDIVIDUALIZED<br>EDUCATION   | RATING DESCRIPTIONS   |   |  | (5) EVIDENCE  |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|   | (2) Beginning   | (3) Developing  | (4) At Standard  |   |
| <p>Children with disabilities are ensured access to, participation in, and progress in the general curriculum.</p> <p><b>FOCUS AREA</b><br/>District procedures for location, referral and identification are transparent, equitable, and multidisciplinary.</p> <p><b>DESCRIBE</b> the procedures that the district has in place for locating, referring and identifying students ages 3 through 21.</p> | <p>–The district has written procedures in place for the location, referral and identification of students ages 3 through 21 who may be disabled.</p> | <p>–The district has processes in place to evaluate the degree to which service providers and schools comply with location, referral and identification establish procedures.</p> | <p>–Based on continuous monitoring data, the district provides technical assistance and professional development to service providers and schools that not meeting the established procedures for location, referral and identification of students ages 3 through 21 who may be disabled.</p> | <p>–Evidence required (classroom observations, benchmark assessments, classroom assessments, classroom work).</p> <p>–Procedure for selecting and administering assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally and functionally.</p> <p>–Assessments used to gather relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>··Cognitive Information</li> <li>··Functional information</li> <li>··Developmental Information</li> <li>··Academic Information</li> </ul> |

**DISTRICT REVIEW ITEM 6**

| (1) STANDARD –<br>INDIVIDUALIZED<br>EDUCATION   | RATING DESCRIPTIONS   |   |   | (5) EVIDENCE  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | (2) Beginning   | (3) Developing  | (4) At Standard   |   |
| <p>Children with disabilities are ensured access to, participation in, and progress in the general curriculum.</p> <p><b>FOCUS AREA</b><br/>The district promotes collaboration among general and special educators at the prevention and intervention levels.</p> <p><b>DESCRIBE</b> opportunities to collaborate that exist within the district. How does the district promote collaboration among general and special educators at the prevention and intervention levels?</p> | <p>–All departments function independently, with minimal involvement across departments on planning and work teams.</p> | <p>–Collaboration between general and special education is encouraged and supported at the district and school levels. Training is provided in collaboration and co-teaching.</p> | <p>–All working and planning teams at the district level include representation across departments.</p> <p>–All schools allocate time for special education and regular education collaboration on a routine basis.</p> <p>–Student support teams include multiple members of the general education personnel. General educators take responsibility for prevention and early intervention.</p> <p>–A variety of tools and resources are available for general educators to provide early intervening services.</p> <p>–Schools are structured in a way that allows for close collaboration between general and special educators, so that most accommodations are provided in the general education classrooms, and special educators are used as a resource by general educators.</p> | <p>–In-service day (agendas with content, planned follow-up activities).</p> <p>–Structure of the intervention team in each school.</p> <p>–Process for reporting student progress for those students receiving services in both a general education setting and special education setting.</p> <p>–Building schedules (highlighting collaborative planning opportunities).</p> |